



*A Service of Worship for
8 May 2022*

Faith is the quality that allows us to find a way to go on,
to feel empowered, to—no matter what—keep on trying.
This is not a sentimental faith that everything will be just fine,
according to our wishes or our timetable.

Rather, it is an awakened faith that gives us the courage
to go into the unknown, the remembrance that nothing is fixed,
and the understanding that as long as we are alive, possibility is alive.

It is the power of faith that inspires us to step forward
into the center of our lives—to participate, to link up,
to reach out to others and let others reach out to us, to work for a better world.

And it is the vitality of faith that tells us, however easy it is to forget
or be overcome by fear, that the place for communicating,
for loving, for sheltering, for trying, is right where we are.

Sharon Salzberg

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Healey Willan
(1880-1968)

“Chorale Prelude on a melody by Melchoir Vulpius”

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #452

St. Michael

“O Day of God, Draw Nigh”

+Opening Sentences

**Trusting God is not an assurance that whatever we do,
all will work out well. It is instead confidence
that God’s call is wise and good.
It is sensitizing ourselves to this call
so that we can be led and guided by it.
It is the renewed willingness to give up
the security we experience in ideas and customs
and to enter into the adventure of the trusting life.**

Time for Children

+Response:

Lasst uns erfreuen

**In every land begin the song, To every land the strains belong:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
In cheerful sound all voices raise, And fill the world with joyful praise.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*Ushers will seat latecomers

+Please stand in body or spirit

Scripture Lesson

Acts 9:1-19
Egil Hovland

“Saul”
Laura Mayo, reader

Silent Reflection

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

God of Grace –

We confess:

You call us, but we do not want to hear.

You call us, but it sounds so unreasonable.

You call us, but we seem so ill-equipped.

You call us, but we are not ready.

You call us .

God of Grace –

We pray:

Pursue each one of us;

be tenacious in your calling, for your sake and for our world's sake.

Words of Assurance

+Hymn #391

Hendon

“Take My Life, verses 1 - 3”

Proclamation

+Hymn #391

Hendon

“Take My Life, verses 4 - 6”

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

Christopher Teel
(b. 1971)

“Pastorale Improvisee”

+Prayer of Dedication

Holy God,

**Judge us as only you can,
with scouring truth and rinsing encouragement,
for, left to ourselves,
we are anxiously condemning or angrily defensive.**

**God of our noblest dreams and deepest hopes,
restore in us clean hearts,
right minds, and a strong resolve
to help remold the soul of our time.**

**Pressure us not to compromise our integrity into duplicity,
our passion into passivity,
our compassion into indifference, or
our conscience into cynicism;**

**So, by your grace, shall we be mercifully set free
to join with you in healing the broken hearts,
the broken circle of your human family
and to find our lives stretched again
to receive your joy and your grace. Amen**

+Doxology

Old Hundredth

***Praise God the Source of life and birth.
Praise God the Word, who came to earth.
Praise God the Spirit, holy flame,
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.***

+Affirmation of Faith

**The goal of Jesus' movement, ministry, and politics is a new creation:
a political order that truly serves the good of all in equal measure.**

**Those of us who strive to practice Jesus' politics
must always keep this as the focus
of our prayers and our compassion,
of our love and faithful social action.**

**If we do not work for, or in some way support
the establishment of God's kingdom of love and justice,
then our silence and inactivity will ultimately serve
the forces of injustice.**

**We wish to be counted among those who truly tried
to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

“Come, Celebrate the Call of God”

**Come, celebrate the call of God
that wakens and renews,
and chooses from us, for our good,
the bringers of good news.
The Spirit’s blessing all ordains
to show what God has done,
yet brings to focus and contains
the many in the one.**

**A chosen one today replies,
and fit and ready stands.
God's calling now we recognize
with prayer and loving hands.
A servant leader, truthful friend,
we gladly will receive,
to stir and comfort, shake and mend,
be glad with us, and grieve.**

**Great Spirit, give us word and breath
in Christ to live and speak,
and shield against the powers of death
the outcast and the weak.
The flag of faith, above defeats,
in heaven's breeze unfurled,
as our faith's deepest gladness meets
the hunger of the world.**

Benediction

Postlude

Francis Jackson
(1917-2022)

“Fanfare”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Dennis Robinson**.

The Call to Worship is by John van der Laar.

The Opening Sentences are from *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* by John Cobb and David Griffin.

The Unison Confession is by Jay Leach.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from *My Heart in My Mouth* by Ted Loder.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted* by Obery Hendricks, Jr.

The text of "Come, Celebrate the Call of God" is by Brian Wren.

Education 9:30 - 10:20 a.m.

Adult Education - Adult Education Classroom, 2nd floor of the Fellowship Hall Building

This Sunday we are again privileged to hear from an accomplished writer who is also one of our own. Ted Estess will share from his collection of personal reflections *Fishing Spirit Lake*.

- *Bill Kline*

Children & Youth Education - Room B, 2nd floor of the Fellowship Hall Building

Children and Youth Announcements

May 15: Annual Children and Youth Auction @ 12:30 Fellowship Hall

If you have any experience or handmade items you would like to donate, please reach out to the children and youth committee members. Examples of services or experiences include offering a jewelry-making or pottery-making class, offering a vacation house or boat excursion, or offering other get-togethers like a dinner or dessert party. Be creative and have fun!

June 6: Youth Moving Forward Meeting

- *Trena' Jamison, Director of Children & Youth*

Announcements

Eduard Gavril Piano Concert at Covenant

Join us for a very special musical night, **Friday, May 13, 2022, at 7:00 PM**. Romanian pianist Eduard Gavril will be presenting a mesmerizing program featuring Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, Stravinsky's Firebird, and selected movements from Enescu's Suite Opus 10 Number 2. The event will be free to the public, however, donations are encouraged and will be forwarded to UNICEF in support of humanitarian relief in Ukraine. Please share this event and bring a friend! Follow Eduard on social media and visit www.eduardgavril.com for more of his work.

Facilitated Mission/Vision Conversation: Holy Excavation

We are excited to ask you to mark your calendars for a mission/vision workshop on **Sunday, May 22 right after church**. A light lunch will be provided. This will be our third attempt to have this time together to workshop, brain-storm, and dream. We are hoping to provide a way to Zoom for those of you who want to participate but are not ready to be present in person.

When we originally scheduled this workshop we were in the midst of tremendous transition: Fran had just retired and we had recently completed the Fellowship Hall building. We are still in transition. Change is part of being alive. We are now transitioning into what it means to be and do church during an endemic. We need to hear from ourselves and each other about who we are now and who we aspire to be. Church consultant Leah Taylor will be leading us through a workshop specifically for churches in transition called *Holy Excavation: an Introduction to Strategic Discernment*. Among the questions we will seek to answer are: What are the values which currently guide our ministry? What is the evidence that we are living out of our values? What is our shared dream with the divine for our faith community? Who is God calling us to be now? We hope you will come!

Calendar

Sun, May 8	9:30 am	Adult Education, Adult Education classroom on the 2nd floor of the Fellowship Hall Building
	9:30 am	Children & Youth Sunday School, Room B, 2nd floor of the Fellowship Hall Building
	9:30 am	Inquirer's Class, Sanctuary
	10:20 am	Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall
	10:40 am	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Sanctuary
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
Tue, May 10	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Thur, May 12	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom
Thur, May 12	7:15 pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Helpful Information

Visitor's Card: If you're a visitor with us, please submit a [Visitor's Card](#).

Celebrations and Concerns: If you would like to share a celebration or concern with the Covenant community, please submit a [Celebrations and Concerns Form](#).

Membership: If you are interested in learning more about Covenant, we encourage you to talk with one of the ministers or the worship leader. Email Office@covenanthouston.org.

Newsletter: To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to office@covenanthouston.org.

Office Hours: The church office is open Monday through Friday from 10am to 2pm.

*Covenant Church affirms the sanctity, dignity, and equality
of human beings and the value of all life in the universe.*

*We welcome persons of all racial and ethnic heritages, all sexual orientations,
all gender identities, and all faith perspectives to our Christian community.*

*We stand for each individual's right to worship God and to respond
to God's call to ministry in her or his own understanding
of God's all-encompassing love.*

*We value a holistic approach to faith and seek to worship in ways that are
intellectually credible, emotionally stimulating, spiritually engaging
and contemporarily relevant.*

We value music and art and ritual to express what we cannot ever fully say.

*We value participation so that we might hear many approaches
to our shared faith.*

Covenant Church, an ecumenical, liberal, Baptist congregation

Members of Covenant, Ministers

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

Brian Buck, Facilities Coordinator

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Christopher Teel, Organist

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Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.